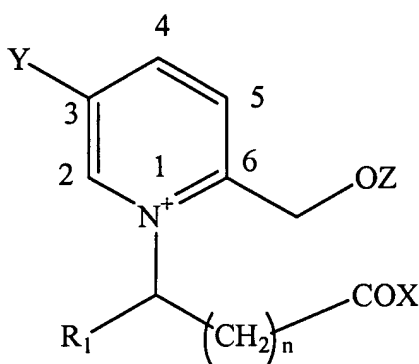


**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A Pyridinium-Betain compound having the general formula (A):



wherein R<sub>1</sub> is H or an ~~primary~~ amino acids side chain that is attached to the structure,

X is OH or its ionised form O<sup>-</sup>,

Y is OH, SH, or their ionised forms O<sup>-</sup> and S<sup>-</sup>,

Z is H, an alkyl group, or a glycosidic group, or a phosphate ~~or ester derivative thereof~~, and

n is an integer of 0 to 4 to represent the chain length of the compound.

Claim 2 (original): The compound of claim 1 wherein a counter-ion of sodium, potassium, ammonium, calcium, magnesium, chloride, nitrate, carbonate, sulphate, or phosphate is associated with the compound.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The compound of claim 1 wherein R1 is the amino acid side chain of glycine, alanine, valine, leucine, isoleucine, phenylalanine, tryptophan, methionine, serine, threonine, cysteine, tyrosine, asparagine, glutamine, aspartic acid, glutamic acid, lysine, 5-hydroxylysine, ornithine, histidine or arginine.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The compound of claim 1, wherein R1 is the amino acid side chain of L-alanine, Y is OH or O<sup>-</sup>, Z is hydrogen, and n is 0.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The compound of claim 1, wherein R1 is the amino acid side chain of glycine, Y is OH or O<sup>-</sup>, Z is hydrogen atom, and n is 0.

Claim 6 (canceled):

Claim 7 (original): The compound of claim 1, in the form of its S-isomer.

Claim 8 (original): A food composition comprising a food and a Pyridinium-Betain compound according to claim 1 in a taste effective amount sufficient to enhance sweetness, saltiness or umami taste characteristics of the food or to reduce bitter taste characteristics of the food.

Claim 9 (original): The food composition of claim 8, wherein the food is chocolate, ice-cream, a beverage, a sugar confectionery, a culinary product, or a petfood.

Claim 10 (original): The food composition of claim 8, wherein the Pyridinium-Betain compound is present in an amount of between 0.01 and 3000 mg/kg of the composition.

Claim 11 (original): The food composition of claim 8, wherein the compound is in the form of its S-isomer.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method of modifying the flavour of a food composition which comprises adding to the food composition a Pyridinium-Betain compound according to claim 1 in a taste effective amount sufficient to enhance sweetness, saltiness or umami taste characteristics of the food or to reduce bitter taste characteristics of the food.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~11~~ 12, wherein the food is chocolate, ice-cream, a beverage, a sugar confectionery, a culinary product, or a petfood.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~11~~ 12, wherein the Pyridinium-Betain compound is present in an amount of between 0.01 and 3000 mg/kg of the composition.

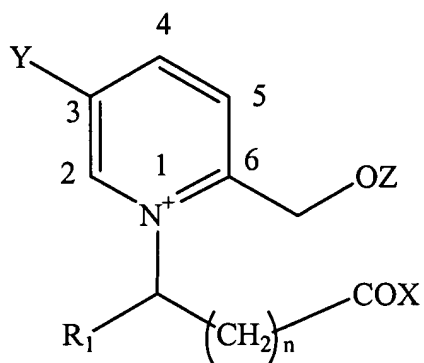
Claim 15 (canceled):

Claim 16 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a Pyridinium-Betain compound according to claim 1, by synthesis using 5-(hydroxymethyl)-2-furaldehyde (HMF) and ~~the corresponding~~ amino acids or peptides to prepare the Pyridinium-Betain compound.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of a Pyridinium-Betain compound according to claim 1, by reacting a 5-(hydroxymethyl)-2-furaldehyde ~~HMF~~ producing precursors and degradation products thereof with ~~a corresponding~~ amino acids or peptides under conditions sufficient to prepare the Pyridinium-Betain compound.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The process of claim 16 wherein the 5-(hydroxymethyl)-2-furaldehyde ~~HMF~~ precursor is a mono- or polysaccharide.

Claim 19 (new): A Pyridinium-Betain compound having the general formula (A)



wherein R<sub>1</sub> is H or an amino acid side chain that is attached to the structure,

X is an amino acid or oligopeptide, comprising primary and secondary L-amino acids,  
and is attached via peptide bonds,

Y is OH, SH, or their ionised forms O<sup>-</sup> and S<sup>-</sup>,

Z is H, an alkyl group, or a glycosidic group, or a phosphate, and

n is an integer of 0 to 4 to represent the chain length of the compound.